

6/11/24

MINUTES

1. Call to Order

Chair Myra Sinnott called the meeting to order at 5:19 pm.

2. Establishment of a Quorum

Quorum was established with over 5 members

Members Present: Vice Chair Bill Thomas, Dick DeGrasse, Cressica Brazier, Harriet Bering, and Holly Fields

Members Present via Zoom: Chair Myra Sinnott

Members Absent: Toby Martin, Josh Leach, Monica Mullins, and Melissa Burns, Ex Officio

Others Present via Zoom: Kizzi Barton

3. Approval of minutes from previous meeting

Motion: To approve Minutes of April 9, 2024, as written, B. Thomas, seconded by D. DeGrasse. No discussion. Roll Call. Motion passed, 6 yes, 0 no.

4. Quick Updates on On-going Projects/Old Business

a. Energy Prize update (Cressica)

- Cressica provided an update handout and reported that the Energy Hub is working on outreach and planning small group discussions. Kizzi is preparing the first "Dinner for your Thoughts," where we are getting people together who haven't otherwise participated in the prize, so we can hear from new voices. Date to be determined.
- We've expressed interest in joining a new network for community groups working on climate and energy issues, called the Maine Energy and Climate Action Network (MAINECAN), organized out of UMaine. Cressica will send summary to group.
- We wrote letters of support for new research groups that are submitting proposals with NREL for hydropower and hydrogen storage technology development projects.
- Our main activity for the past month has been organizing and planning the Clean Energy to Communities (C2C) Technical Assistance Program application, which is due in one month (June 14). There are four main parts to this:
 - Community: funding for capacity building on the island to do outreach and more energy planning activities. Talking with community-based organizations.
 - Technical Assistance: The National Labs would support us alongside other implementation partners in order to design and do demonstration projects.
 - CMP is going to support us, with a letter of support and advising. Hopefully we will develop a partnership with them through this.
 - Other organizations who can support us: Island Institute has agreed to give us a letter of support. Bringing together a range of organizations to collaborate with in the next stage of energy planning for the island through the C2C program.

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- The Town Center microgrid & solar project: Bill has been working on solar site identification and outreach with the ICC.
- We are working on island-wide solar site identification and different ownership models with Harriet and others.
- Small-scale solar array designs: a number of community members are interested.
- Energy Efficiency: Kizzi launched the Window Dressers Community Build recruitment this past week. We have about 5 people signed up already.
- Working on Home Energy Consult reports.
- The most important component for the Prize is getting the Home Energy Surveys completed. We have about 70 done, and need 200, which is about 50% of year-round homes. For a good sample, we would like the results to be 2/3 year-round homes, and 1/3 seasonal homes.
- We will be sharing our proposal summary with the Select Board.
- Kizzi is planning to set up a table at the Sporting Club's Old Home Day.
- We are looking for other opportunities for outreach before the July 12th end date.
- Dick suggested that when doing outreach, Kizzi should know how CMP billing and community solar offers work.

b. Library/Town Office Update

- Bill stated we have shut the door on the Midcoast Energy's proposal. Solar Logix has been much more adaptable and helpful. They've given us a good deal.
- The total cost of the project is about \$140,000. Based upon the surface area and the rebate rate, we're going to get a rebate of \$109,000, which brings the cost of the heating system in this building to a little over \$30,000. Bill sent this proposal to Satchel Toole at Efficiency Maine. He hadn't looked at it in detail, but his short response was positive. This seems to be a solid proposal.
- Bill urges that we start to move forward on this. Cressica added that we need to get approval for the project by the end of the month, before our next meeting. The application to Efficiency Maine has been started. Waiting to hear from Satchel Toole.
- Solar Logix has promised that they will get this done and billed before the end of the fiscal year.
- Myra reiterated that getting the application in should be a top priority, and thanked Cressica and Bill for their hard work on this.
- Cressica reported that she has permission to purchase lighting for the library through the Town Office. She will be doing this tomorrow. We may use Greg Janney as the electrician, but we'll get whoever is available so we can this done before the end of the fiscal year.

c. Municipal Building Project update (Cressica)

- Myra reported that the Town voted to approve the additional bond for the project.

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- Cressica stated that the most relevant issue is the solar array on the Health Center building, because we have the grant funding for it. Cressica has until June 12th to solicit quotes for it, and she's working with the Health Center staff to establish the rest of the detailed budget, as well as the architect and Construction Manager, to figure out what other budget items we can include in the grant submission.
 - Bill suggested asking if they can build a substructure for the solar array. Cressica replied that they have a system for installing solar panels on the flat part of the roof. They're low pitch, but we only lose about 10% of the generating capacity. We can also possibly do a ground-mount array.
 - Dick asked if the design for the solar array is done. Cressica replied that it is not; they are waiting for quotes now. He asked if someone has done an economic analysis on various heating options, and if it will have heat pumps or any other alternatives. Cressica replied that they are doing a budget analysis, and there will be heat pumps in the building. This grant will not pay for the heat pumps. We're looking for other components of the building that can be paid for with the grant. There are a lot of more immediate needs that super-cede a battery at this time. Dick requested to be kept up to date on the details. He's having discussions with Constellation, the power supplier for the Town. He would like to have more knowledge. He will send info to Cressica for the rate structure, so she can send it to the designers. Bill would like to see the rate options as well.
- d. EV Charger update (Monica/Holly)
- Holly reported on an email from Monica. The first option for the fire-suppression blanket is not viable, and she's looking into something else. Myra added that Murt was having trouble getting in touch with the supplier. Holly stated there's a huge demand for these things, and there are supply-chain issues. We've given Murt the go-ahead to purchase the gear he needs.
 - Myra stated she talked with Murt and Monica last month to explain the June 30th deadline for the purchase. Discussion about how to make sure this gets spent this year. We trust Murt to buy the equipment that's appropriate. He's been doing training.
 - Kizzi added that most EV fire-suppression blankets are reusable up to about 30 times.
 - Holly will find out about transferring the money to Murt. She will check with Murt tomorrow about the status of his purchase.
 - Discussion about this year's budget vs. next year's budget. Next year will be tight.
- e. Maine utility policy/rates update (Dick)
- Dick stated that he's been doing homework on solicitations by alternative electrical supply companies that say they can offer lower rates than CMP. He is suspicious of most of them. They don't quote the right rates. There are two segments to the CMP bill, one is regulated, and one is unregulated. CMP is a regulated utility; the rate structure is controlled by the PUC. The supply companies are unregulated, with somewhat of an exception to the standard offer.

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- Most bills are paid online, and many people don't read the rate structures on the bill.
- Smart Energy quotes the wrong price in their solicitation, as they propose to take over the supply section of the bill. The rates that they quote are not comparable. They take the total CMP bill and divide by kW hour, which is not accurate. 60% of CMP's bill is supply, which is unregulated.
- Dick is concerned that Kizzi should understand this when talking to the community about power. He wants people to be careful about signing up with these solar-energy companies.
- Kizzi clarified that she's not asking people to sign up for anything. She's had one or two questions, but most people have a healthy suspicion of these companies.
- Myra added that people who pay online can also see the rate structure on the site. With some community solar suppliers, there are efforts to make the rate structure clear.
- Bill added that Smart Energy gets poor reviews from around the country.
- Bill suggests we table this discussion until after the grant proposals go in. We should fill this need, and do the research to see which of these organizations are credible.
- We can put together a fact sheet. Bill has been collecting info for this purpose.

5. Discussion

a. Harriet Bering as IEC Chair.

- Myra stated it's been a great honor and a great experience being the interim chair for the past two years. She is moving to Nashville for the summer, so this is a good time to have someone take over.
- Harriet stated she is happy to help manage the meetings, but does not have the expertise that many of the members have. She relies on the other committee members for that expertise.

Motion: To nominate Harriet Bering as Chair of the Islesboro Energy Committee, B. Thomas, seconded by D. DeGrasse. M. Sinnott reported that T. Martin voted in favor in absentia via email. Roll Call. Motion passed, 6 yes, 0 no. H. Bering abstained.

6. Next meeting, Tuesday, June 11th, at 5:15pm.

7. Adjourn

Motion to adjourn meeting at 6:13 pm, B. Thomas, seconded by H. Fields. Roll Call. Motion passed, 6 yes, 0 no, Unanimous.

Respectfully Submitted,



Carrie Reed, Secretary